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Abstract

Although it is widely accepted that a basic task of schooling is to prepare each new generation for their responsibilities as citizens, the appropriate form and content of citizenship education is often controversial. This paper discusses some of these controversies. I begin by arguing that citizenship is more complicated than is often realized, and that even 'minimal' conceptions of citizenship impose significant obligations and constraints on individual and group behaviour. I then consider three inter-related areas of debate: whether citizenship education requires common schooling; whether promoting responsible citizenship requires promoting personal autonomy; and whether promoting a shared civic identity requires teaching not only shared political values or principles but also promoting particular national or cultural identities. These three issues help illustrate the centrality of education for citizenship to both political theory and educational philosophy.

Keywords

citizenship, education, democracy, liberalism

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Contents

It is widely accepted that a basic task of schooling is to prepare each new generation for their responsibilities as citizens. Indeed, the need to create a knowledgeable and responsible citizenry was one of the major reasons for establishing a public school system, and for making education mandatory. Education for citizenship includes, but also goes far beyond, classes in 'civics'. Citizenship education is not just a matter of learning the basic facts about the institutions and procedures of political life; it also involves acquiring a range of dispositions, virtues, and loyalties which are intimately bound up with the practice of democratic citizenship. Children acquire these virtues and loyalties not just (or even primarily) in civics classes. Rather, they are inculcated throughout the educational system. The aim of educating citizens affects what subjects are taught, how they are taught, and in what sorts of classrooms. In this sense, education for citizenship is not an isolated subset of the curriculum, but rather is one of the ordering goals or principles which shapes the entire curriculum.

In this paper, I will discuss some of the issues raised by citizenship education. I will begin by considering what citizenship means in modern democratic societies, and what sorts of capacities and dispositions it requires (section 1). I hope to show that liberal democratic citizenship is more complicated than is often realized, and that even 'minimal' conceptions of citizenship impose significant obligations and constraints on individual and group behaviour. I will then discuss why schools must play a role in educating children for citizenship (section 2). It would be unrealistic to expect schools by themselves to develop the skills and virtues needed for democratic citizenship. People learn to be responsible citizens not only in schools, but also in the family, neighbourhood, churches, and manifold other groups and forums in civil society. Schools are not the only, or perhaps even the primary, forum for learning citizenship, but they are, I believe, indispensable. These other institutions supplement, but cannot replace, the provision of citizenship education in schools.

The rest of the paper will then consider three inter-related areas of controversy: whether citizenship education requires common schooling (section 3); whether promoting responsible citizenship requires promoting personal autonomy (section 4); and whether promoting a shared civic identity requires teaching not only shared political values or principles but also promoting particular national or cultural identities (section 5). These three issues are by no means exhaustive of the range of controversies that arise, but they suggest the centrality of education for citizenship to both political theory and educational philosophy.

1. The Nature and Importance of Citizenship

There has been an explosion of interest in the concept of citizenship amongst political theorists. In 1978, it could be confidently stated that "the concept of citizenship has gone out of fashion among political thinkers" (van Gunsteren 1978:9). Fifteen years later, citizenship has become the "buzz word" amongst thinkers on all points of the political spectrum (Heater 1990:293).

Interest in citizenship has been sparked by a number of recent political events and trends throughout the world – increasing voter apathy and long-term welfare dependency in the United States, the resurgence of nationalist movements in Eastern Europe, the stresses created by an increasingly multicultural and multiracial population in Western Europe, the backlash against the welfare state in Thatcher's England, the failure of environmental policies that rely on voluntary citizen cooperation, etc.

These events have made clear that the health and stability of a modern democracy depends, not only on the justice of its 'basic structure',[1] but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens: e.g., their sense of identity, and how they view potentially competing forms of national, regional, ethnic or religious identities; their ability to tolerate and work together with others who are different from themselves; their desire to participate in the political process in order to promote the public good and hold political authorities accountable; their willingness to show self-restraint and exercise personal responsibility in their economic demands, and in personal choices which affect their health and the environment. Without citizens who possess these qualities, democracies become difficult to govern, even unstable.[2]

Many classical liberals believed that a liberal democracy could function effectively even in the absence of an especially virtuous citizenry, by creating checks and balances. Institutional and procedural devices such as the separation of powers, a bicameral legislature and federalism would all serve to block would-be oppressors. Even if each person pursued her own self-interest, without regard for the common good, one set of private interests would check another set of private interests. Kant, for example, thought that the problem of good government "can be solved even for a race of devils" (quoted in Galston 1991:215). However, it has become clear that procedural-institutional mechanisms to balance self-interest are not enough, and that some level of civic virtue and public-spiritedness is required.

Consider the many ways that public policy relies on responsible personal lifestyle decisions: the state will be unable to provide adequate health care if citizens do not act responsibly with

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1. Rawls says that the "basic structure" of society is the primary subject of a theory of justice (1993:257–89).
2. This may account for the recent interest in citizenship promotion amongst governments (eg., Britain's Commission on Citizenship, Encouraging Citizenship 1990; Senate of Australia, Active Citizenship Revisited 1991; Senate of Canada, Canadian Citizenship: Sharing the Responsibility 1993).

respect to their own health, in terms of maintaining a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and limiting their consumption of liquor and tobacco; the state will be unable to meet the needs of children, the elderly or the disabled if citizens do not agree to share this responsibility by providing some care for their relatives; the state cannot protect the environment if citizens are unwilling to reduce, reuse and recycle in their own consumer choices; the ability of the government to regulate the economy can be undermined if citizens borrow immoderate amounts or demand excessive wage increases; attempts to create a fairer society will flounder if citizens are chronically intolerant of difference and generally lacking in a sense of justice. Without cooperation and self-restraint in these areas, "the ability of liberal societies to function successfully progressively diminishes" (Galston 1991:220).[3]

In short, we need "a fuller, richer and yet more subtle understanding and practice of citizenship", because "what the state needs from the citizenry cannot be secured by coercion, but only cooperation and self-restraint in the exercise of private power" (Cairns and Williams 1985:43). Yet there is growing fear that the civility and public-spiritedness of citizens of liberal democracies may be in serious decline (Walzer 1992:90).[4]

Certain virtues are needed in virtually any political order, whether it is liberal and democratic or not. These would include general virtues, such as courage and law-abidingness, as well as economic virtues, such as the capacity to delay self-gratification or to adapt to economic and technological change.[5] But there are also certain virtues which are distinctive to a liberal democracy, relating to the basic principles of a liberal regime, and to the political role citizens occupy within it, and it is these which I wish to focus on.

I will consider four such virtues:

(a) public-spiritedness, including the ability to evaluate the performance of those in office, and the willingness to engage in public discourse;

(b) a sense of justice, and the capacity to discern and respect the rights of others, and to moderate one's own claims accordingly;

(c) civility and tolerance;

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3. Hence recent theories of citizenship emphasize that citizenship requires a balance of rights and responsibilities. For a survey of recent work on citizenship theory, which I am drawing on in this section, see Kymlicka and Norman 1994. For a useful collection of recent articles, see Beiner 1995. For a more historical survey of citizenship theory, see Walzer 1989, and the readings collected in Clarke 1994.

4. According to a recent survey, only 12% of American teenagers said voting was important to being a good citizen. Moreover, this apathy is not just a function of youth – comparisons with similar surveys from the previous 50 years suggest that "the current cohort knows less, cares less, votes less, and is less critical of its leaders and institutions than young people have been at any time over the past five decades" (Glendon 1991:129). The evidence from Great Britain is similar (Heater 1990:215).

5. For a helpful discussion and typology, see Galston 1991:221–4.

(d) a shared sense of solidarity or loyalty.

Many commentators argue that the fourth virtue is inapplicable to liberal democracies, or perhaps more accurately, is redundant, since it supervenes on the first three. On this view, whatever sense of shared loyalty is required in a liberal democracy simply involves loyalty to principles of tolerance, justice and democracy. Shared commitment to these basic political principles is a sufficient foundation for a shared political identity or loyalty. I think that is mistaken, and will return to this point in section 5 below.

For the moment, however, I want to focus on the first three, starting with 'public-spiritedness'. This includes the ability and willingness to engage in public discourse about matters of public policy, and to question authority. These are perhaps the most distinctive aspects of citizenship in a liberal democracy, since they are precisely what distinguish 'citizens' within a democracy from the 'subjects' of an authoritarian regime.

The need to question authority arises in part from the fact that citizens in a representative democracy elect representatives who govern in their name. Hence an important responsibility of citizens is to monitor those officials, and judge their conduct. The need to engage in public discourse arises from the fact that the decisions of government in a democracy should be made publicly, through free and open discussion. But the virtue of public discourse is not just the willingness to participate in politics, or to make one's views known. Rather, as William Galston notes, it "includes the willingness to listen seriously to a range of views which, given the diversity of liberal societies, will include ideas the listener is bound to find strange and even obnoxious. The virtue of political discourse also includes the willingness to set forth one's own views intelligibly and candidly as the basis for a politics of persuasion rather than manipulation or coercion" (Galston 1991:227).

Stephen Macedo calls this the virtue of "public reasonableness". Liberal citizens must give reasons for their political demands, not just state preferences or make threats. Moreover, these reasons must be "public" reasons, in the sense that they are capable of persuading people of different faiths and nationalities. Hence it is not enough to invoke Scripture or tradition.[6] Liberal citizens must justify their political demands in terms that fellow citizens can understand and accept as consistent with their status as free and equal citizens. It requires a conscientious effort to distinguish those beliefs which are matters of private faith from those which are capable of public defense, and to see how issues look from the point of view of those with differing religious commitments and cultural backgrounds. As I discuss below, this is a stringent requirement that many religious groups find difficult to accept.

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6. See also Audi 1989; Strike 1994.

The virtue of public reasonableness is less relevant for citizens who do not wish to participate in political affairs, and there will always be a portion of the population who have little or no desire to be politically active. Some people will find their greatest joys and projects in other areas of life, including the family, or the arts, or religion. A liberal democracy must respect such diverse conceptions of the good life, and should not compel people to adopt a conception of the good life which privileges political participation as the source of meaning or satisfaction.[7] For these more or less apolitical people, the virtue of public reasonableness may be less important.

Some commentators would argue that most people in contemporary democracies will fall into this apolitical camp – that meaningful political participation is almost inevitably confined to elites. According to T.H. McLaughlin, this is one of the important points of division between 'minimal' and 'maximal' conceptions of citizenship. On the minimal view, citizenship for most people primarily involves passive respect for laws, not the active exercise of political rights. By contrast, maximal conceptions of democracy insist that a true democracy, or that political justice, must aim for more widespread participation (McLaughlin 1992a).

Justice clearly requires that everyone have the opportunity to become active citizens, if they so choose, which means eliminating any economic or social barriers to the participation of disadvantaged groups, such as women, the poor, racial and ethnic minorities, etc. But whether we should encourage all individuals to choose to be active political participants is another matter. Whether active citizenship should be encouraged depends, I think, on the second virtue listed above – namely, a sense of justice. To have a sense of justice does not simply mean that we do not actively harm or exploit others. It also involves the duty to prevent injustice, by creating and upholding just institutions. So if there are serious injustices in our society which can only be rectified by political action, then citizens should recognize an obligation to protest against that injustice. Or if our political institutions are no longer functioning, perhaps due to excessive levels of apathy, or to the abuse of power, then citizens have an obligation to protect these institutions from being undermined. To sit passively by while injustices are committed, or democratic institutions collapse, in the hope that others will step in, is to be a free rider. Everyone should do their fair share to create and uphold just institutions.

The extent of injustice, and the health of political institutions, will vary from society to society. In some times and places, though perhaps only in rare and fortunate circumstances, our

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7. This is why liberals cannot endorse a strong version of 'civic republicanism'. In one sense, civic republicanism refers to any view which highlights the importance of civic virtues, and the extent to which the functioning of a democracy requires certain virtues and identities amongst its citizens. In this sense, as I have argued, liberals must be republicans. But in another stronger sense, civic republicanism refers to the view that the best life – the most truly human life – is one which privileges political participation over other spheres of human endeavour. This sort of position is defended by Oldfield (1990b), Pocock (1992), Beiner (1992), Skinner (1992), amongst others. However, it is inconsistent with liberalism's commitment to pluralism, and in any event is implausible as general account of the good life for all persons. See Kymlicka and Norman 1994:361–2.

natural duty of justice will not require us to participate actively. Where a society is basically well-ordered, and its institutions healthy, then individuals should be free to follow their own conceptions of the good, even if these give little or no weight to political participation.

So there will be times and places where minimal citizenship is all that we can or should require. And for minimal citizens, the stringent demands of 'public reasonableness' will be less significant. But even here, the requirements of liberal citizenship are by no means trivial. The obligations of minimal citizenship are often described in purely negative terms – ie, the obligation not to break the law, and not to harm others, or restrict their rights and liberties. Minimal citizenship, in short, is often seen as simply requiring non-interference with others.

But that ignores one of the most basic requirements of liberal citizenship, albeit one that is often neglected in theoretical discussions. This is the virtue of 'civility' or 'decency', and it is a virtue that even the most minimal citizen must learn, since it applies not only to political activity, but also – indeed, primarily – to our actions in everyday life, on the street, in neighbourhood shops, and in the diverse institutions and forums of civil society.

Civility refers to the way we treat non-intimates with whom we come into face-to-face contact. To understand civility, it is helpful to compare it with the related requirement of non-discrimination. The legal prohibition on discrimination initially only applied to government actions. Government laws and policies which discriminated against people on the basis of race or gender have gradually been struck down in Western democracies, since they violate the basic liberal commitment to equality of opportunity. But it has become clear that whether individuals have genuinely equal opportunity depends not only government actions, but also on the actions of institutions within civil society – corporations, schools, stores, landlords etc. If people are discriminated against by prejudiced shop-owners or real estate agents, they will be denied equal citizenship, even if the state itself does not discriminate. Hence legal requirements of non-discrimination have increasingly been applied to 'private' firms and associations.

This extension of non-discrimination from government to civil society is not just a shift in the scale of liberal norms, it also involves a radical extension in the obligations of liberal citizenship. For the obligation to treat people as equal citizens now applies to the most common everyday decisions of individuals. It is no longer permissible for businesses to refuse to hire black employees, or to serve black customers, or to segregate their black employees or customers. But not just that. The norms of non-discrimination entail that it is impermissible for businesses to ignore their black customers, or treat them rudely, although it is not always possible to legally enforce this. Businesses must in effect make blacks feel welcome, just as if they were whites. Blacks must, in short, be treated with *civility*. The same applies to the way citizens treat each other in schools or recreational associations, even in private clubs.

This sort of civility is the logical extension of non-discrimination, since it is needed to ensure that all citizens have the same opportunity to participate within civil society. But it now extends into the very hearts and minds of citizens. Liberal citizens must learn to interact in everyday settings on an equal basis with people for whom they might harbour prejudice.

The extent to which this requirement of civility can (or should) be legally enforced is limited. It is easier to compel businesses to be non-discriminatory in hiring than to compel them to treat black customers with civility. But the recent spread of laws and regulations against sexual and racial harassment, both in society generally and within schools and businesses, can be seen as an attempt to ensure a level of civility, since they include forms of offensive speech as well as physical intimidation, And while it is obviously impossible to compel civility between citizens in less formal settings – e.g, whether whites smile or scowl at an Asian family in the neighbourhood park – liberal citizenship nonetheless requires this sort of civility.

It is easy to trivialize this requirement of civility as being simply 'good manners'. Philip Rieff, for example, dismisses the insistence on civility as a superficial facade that simply hides a deeper indifference to the needs of others. As he puts it, "We have long known what 'equality' means in American culture: it means... a smile fixed to the face, demanding you return a smile" (quoted in Cuddihy 1978:6). John Murray Cuddihy views civility as the imposition of a Protestant (and bourgeois) sense of 'good taste' on other religious groups. He argues that Catholics and Jews (and now Muslims) have had to abandon their conception of true faith, which required the public expression of contempt for other religions, to conform to this 'religion of civility'.

It is true that liberal societies have reinforced, and thereby partially conflated, the moral obligation of civility with an aesthetic conception of 'good manners'. For example, the expectation of civility is sometimes used to discourage the sort of forceful protest that may be needed for an oppressed group to be heard. For a disadvantaged group to 'make a scene' is often seen as 'in bad taste'. This sort of exaggerated emphasis on good manners can be used to promote servility. True civility does not mean smiling at others no matter how badly they treat you, as if oppressed groups should be nice to their oppressors. Rather, it means treating others as equals on the condition that they extend the same recognition to you. While there is some overlap between civility and a more general politeness, they are nonetheless distinct – civility involves upholding norms of equality within the public life of a society, including civil society, and thereby upholding essential liberal values.[8]

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8. My discussion here draws extensively on Jeff Spinner's account of civility (1994:chap. 3). It also draws on Patricia White's account of civility, or what she calls 'decency' (1992), although I disagree in part with her emphasis. She seems primarily concerned with improving the overall level of 'decency' in society, rather than with eliminating glaring instances of incivility aimed at identifiable groups. For example, she compares the smiling and cooperative waiters in a Canadian cafe with the surly and uncooperative waiters in a Polish cafe (1992:208), and argues that we should educate children to be friendly with strangers rather than surly. While I agree that it's a

2. The Need for Citizenship Education in Schools

Even the most minimal conception of liberal citizenship, therefore, requires a significant range of civic virtues. But are schools the appropriate arena to teach these virtues, given that this would involve inculcating substantive (and controversial) moral beliefs? I believe the schools have an unavoidable role, in part because no other social institution can take their place.

To be sure, other institutions can play a supplementary role in promoting civic virtue. For example, theorists of the 'New Right' often praise the market as a school of virtue. Many Thatcher/Reagan reforms of the 1980s aimed to extend the scope of markets in people's lives – through freer trade, deregulation, tax cuts, the weakening of trade unions, and reducing welfare benefits – in part in order to teach people the virtues of initiative and self-reliance. Moreover, markets are said to encourage civility, since companies which refuse to hire black employees, or serve black customers, will be at a competitive disadvantage.

However, the limits of the market as a school of civic virtue are clear. Many market deregulations arguably made possible an era of unprecedented greed and economic irresponsibility, as evidenced by the savings-and-loan and junk bond scandals in America. Markets teach initiative, but not a sense of justice or social responsibility (Mulgan 1991:39). And so long as a sizeable portion of the population harbours prejudices towards certain groups, then businesses will have an economic incentive to serve that market, by creating goods and services that exclude these groups.[9] In any event, how the market cannot teach those civic virtues specific to political participation and dialogue – eg., the virtue of public reasonableness.

Following Rousseau and J.S. Mill, many 'participatory democrats' assume that political participation itself will teach people responsibility and toleration. As Adrian Oldfield notes, they place their faith in the activity of participation "as the means whereby individuals may become

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good thing for people to display this sort of decency, and that a minimal level of it is a precondition of a functioning democracy, I do not think this is the fundamental problem for citizenship education. From my point of view, waiters who are only minimally cheerful to all their customers are morally preferable to waiters who are generally very cheerful but who are surly to black customers. The latter may display more decency overall, but their behaviour towards an identifiable group threaten the most basic norms of liberal citizenship. However, I agree with White that it is important to be sensitive to the cultural variations in norms of civility (White 1992:215). Iris Young makes a similar point about cultural variations in norms of public reasonableness (Young 1993).

9. For example, real-estate agents have an economic incentive to maintain segregated housing. In any event, New Right reforms arguably violated the requirements of liberal justice, since cutting welfare benefits, far from getting the disadvantaged back on their feet, has expanded the underclass. Class inequalities have been exacerbated, and the working poor and unemployed have been effectively disenfranchised, unable to participate in the social and political life of the country (Fierlbeck 1991:579). So even if the market taught civic virtue, laissez-faire capitalism violates the principle that all members of society have an equal opportunity to be active citizens.

accustomed to perform the duties of citizenship. Political participation enlarges the minds of individuals, familiarizes them with interests which lie beyond the immediacy of personal circumstance and environment, and encourages them to acknowledge that public concerns are the proper ones to which they should pay attention" (Oldfield 1990a:184).

Unfortunately, this faith in the educative function of participation seems overly optimistic. Emphasizing participation does not yet explain how to ensure that citizens participate responsibly – i.e., in a public-spirited, rather than self-interested or prejudiced, way (Mulgan 1991:40–1). Empowered citizens may use their power irresponsibly by pushing for benefits and entitlements they cannot ultimately afford; or by voting themselves tax breaks and slashing assistance to the needy; or by "seeking scapegoats in the indolence of the poor, the strangeness of ethnic minorities, or the insolence and irresponsibility of modern women" (Fierlbeck 1991:592). Successful political participation requires the ability to create coalitions, which encourages a partial development of the virtues of justice and public reasonableness. No one can hope to succeed in political life if they make no effort to listen to or accommodate the needs and views of others. But in many cases, a winning coalition can be built while ignoring the claims of marginalized groups. Indeed, if a significant portion of the population is prejudiced, then ignoring or attacking such group may be the best route to political success.

'Civil-society theorists' emphasize the necessity of civility and self-restraint to a healthy democracy, but deny that either the market or political participation is sufficient to teach these virtues. Instead, it is in the voluntary organizations of civil society – churches, families, unions, ethnic associations, cooperatives, environmental groups, neighbourhood associations, support groups, charities – that we learn the virtues of mutual obligation. As Michael Walzer puts it, "The civility that makes democratic politics possible can only be learned in the associational networks" of civil society (Walzer 1992:104).

Because these groups are voluntary, failure to live up to the responsibilities that come with them is usually met simply with disapproval, rather than legal punishment. Yet because the disapproval comes from family, friends, colleagues or comrades, it is in many ways a more powerful incentive to act responsibly than punishment by an impersonal state. It is here that "human character, competence, and capacity for citizenship are formed", for it is here that we internalize the idea of personal responsibility and mutual obligation, and learn the voluntary self-restraint which is essential to truly responsible citizenship.

The claim that civil society is the "seedbed of civic virtue" (Glendon 1991:109) is essentially an empirical claim, for which there is little hard evidence one way or the other.[10] It is an old and venerable view, but it is not obviously true. It may be in the neighbourhood that we learn to be

10. But see Putnam (1993), who provides strong evidence that the reason why some Italian regional governments function better than others is the number and vitality of civic associations in each region.

good neighbours, but neighbourhood associations also teach people to operate on the "NIMBY" (not in my backyard) principle when it comes to the location of group homes or public works. Similarly, the family is often "a school of despotism" that teaches male dominance over women (Okin 1992:65); churches often teach deference to authority and intolerance of other faiths; ethnic groups often teach prejudice against other races, and so on.

Walzer recognizes that most people are "trapped in one or another subordinate relationship, where the 'civility' they learned was deferential rather than independent and active". In these circumstances, he says, we have to "reconstruct" the associational network "under new conditions of freedom and equality". Similarly, when the activities of some associations "are narrowly conceived, partial and particularist", then "they need political correction". Walzer calls his view "critical associationalism" to signify that the associations of civil society may need to be reformed in the light of principles of citizenship (Walzer 1992:106–7).

But this may go too far in the other direction. Rather than supporting voluntary associations, this approach may unintentionally license wholesale intervention in them. Governments must of course intervene to protect the rights of people inside and outside the group, if these rights are threatened. But do we want governments to reconstruct churches, for example, to make them more internally democratic, or to make sure that their members learn to be critical rather than deferential? And, in any event, wouldn't reconstructing churches, families or unions to make them more internally democratic start to undermine their essentially uncoerced and voluntary character, which is what supposedly made them the seedbeds of civic virtue?

Indeed, it would be unreasonable to expect churches to teach the virtue of public reasonableness. Public reasonableness is essential in political debate, but is unnecessary and sometimes undesirable in the private sphere. It would be absurd to ask church-goers to abstain from appealing to Scripture in deciding how to run their church.

Civil-society theorists demand too much of voluntary associations in expecting them to be the main school for, or a small-scale replica of, democratic citizenship. While these associations may teach civic virtue, that is not their raison d'être. The reason why people join churches, families, or ethnic organizations is not to learn civic virtue. It is rather to honour certain values, and enjoy certain human goods, and these motives may have little to do with the promotion of citizenship. To expect parents or priests to organize the internal life of their groups so as to maximally promote citizenship is to ignore why these groups exist in the first place. (Some associations, like the Boy Scouts, are designed to promote citizenship, but they are the exception not the rule).

It seems then that we cannot rely on the market, the family, or the associations of civil society to teach civic virtue. People will not automatically learn to engage in public discourse, or to

question authority, in any of these spheres, since these spheres are often held together by private discourse and respect for authority.

This suggests that schools must teach children how to engage in the kind of critical reasoning and moral perspective that defines public reasonableness. And indeed, as I noted earlier, promoting these sorts of virtues was one of the fundamental justifications for mandatory education. But using schools to promote civic virtue raises many controversies, of which I will briefly examine three – the role of separate schools, the teaching of autonomy, and the relationship between civic and cultural identities.

3. Citizenship and Separate Schools

The need for citizenship education raises questions about the role of separate schools in a liberal democracy, particularly religious schools. Various religious groups have sought to establish separate schools, partly in order to teach their religious doctrine, but also to reduce the exposure of their children to the members of other religious groups. Most liberal states have accepted this demand, as a way of respecting parental rights and religious freedom, but have insisted that such schools teach a core curriculum, including citizenship education.

It is not clear, however, that this compromise position – separate schools with a common curriculum – provides the appropriate sort of citizenship education. Such schools are obviously capable of teaching basic facts about government. But as I noted earlier, citizenship education is not simply a matter of knowledge of political institutions and constitutional principles. It is also a matter of how we think about and behave towards others, particularly those who differ from us in their race, religion, class, etc. Liberal citizenship requires cultivating the habit of civility, and the capacity for public reasonableness, in our interaction with others. Indeed, it is precisely these habits and capacities which most need to be learned in schools, for they are unlikely to be learned in smaller groups or associations, like the family, neighbourhood, or church, which tend to be homogenous in their ethnocultural backgrounds and religious beliefs.

It is not clear that separate religious schools can provide an adequate education in either civility or public reasonableness. For these virtues are not only, or even primarily, learned through the explicit curriculum. For example, common schools teach civility not just by telling students to be nice, but also by insisting that students sit beside students of different races and religions, and cooperate with them on school projects or sports teams (Gutmann 1987:53).

Similarly, common schools teach public reasonableness not only by telling students that there are a plurality of religious views in the world, and that reasonable people disagree on the merits of these views. They also create the social circumstances whereby students can see the reasonableness of these disagreements. It is not enough to simply tell students that the majority of the people in the world do not share their religion. So long as one is surrounded by

people who share one's faith, one may still succumb to the temptation to think that everyone who rejects one's religion is somehow illogical or depraved. To learn public reasonableness, students must come to know and understand people who are reasonable and decent and humane, but who do not share their religion. Only in this way can students learn how personal faith differs from public reasonableness, and where to draw that line. This sort of learning requires the presence within a classroom of people with varying ethnocultural and religious backgrounds (Callan 1995).

In these ways, religious schools are limited in their capacity to provide an adequate citizenship education. Of course, it is important not to idealize common schools, which suffer their own deficiencies. For example, while common schools in North America typically contain a diversity of religions, they are more segregated than religious schools by class, race and academic talent (Gutmann 1987: 115–17). Yet divisions of class and race are equally important obstacles to civility and public reasonableness as religious divisions. Indeed, one could argue that the greatest failure of liberal citizenship in the United States is not the division between religious groups, but the increasing desire of middle-class whites to distance themselves (both physically and emotionally) from inner-city blacks, or the poor more generally. In terms of teaching students how to have a public dialogue with the disadvantaged, religious schools may well do better than a common school in the suburbs full of well-off (but religiously diverse) whites.

Moreover, it is important to distinguish temporary or transitional separate schooling from permanent separation. The requirements of liberal citizenship suggest that common schooling is necessary – or at least highly desirable – at some point in the educational process. But there is no reason why the entire process should be integrated. Indeed, there are good reasons for thinking that some children may do best by having their early schooling in separate schools, beside others who share their background, before moving into a common school later in the process. For example, this may be true of historically disadvantaged groups (girls, blacks) who can best develop their self-esteem in an environment free of prejudice (McLaughlin 1992b:122). More generally, schooling within a particular ethnocultural or religious setting may provide virtues unavailable within the common schools. If common schools do a better job promoting a shared sense of justice, separate schools may do better at providing children with a clear sense of what it is to have a stable sense of the good. They may provide a better environment for developing the capacity for in-depth engagement with a particular cultural tradition, and for loyalty and commitment to particular projects and relationships (Callan 1995:22–23; McLaughlin 1992b:123–4). There is more than one starting point from which children can learn liberal citizenship.[11]

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11. For more detailed explorations of this theme, see Callan 1995; McLaughlin 1992b.

The requirement of common schools – even if limited to the later stages of children's education – will be rejected by some religious groups, who insist on keeping their children separate and apart from the rest of society. Should a liberal state impose integrated common schools, in the name of citizenship education? In answering this, it is worth distinguishing two kinds of religious groups that might seek exemption from common schooling. Some groups, like the Amish, voluntarily isolate themselves from the larger society, and avoid participating in either politics or the mainstream institutions of civil society. They do not vote, or hire employees, or attempt to influence public policy (except where a proposed policy would jeopardize their isolation), and seek only to be left alone. Since they do not participate in either politics or civil society, it is less urgent that they learn the virtues of civility and public reasonableness. Jeff Spinner calls the Amish "partial citizens", and he argues that because they have relinquished the right to participate, they can also be absolved of the responsibilities which accompany that right, including the responsibility to learn and practice civility and public reasonableness (Spinner 1994:98). Hence he supports their right to withdraw their children from school at the age of 14, before they would have to learn about the larger society, or interact with non-Amish children. Assuming that such groups are small, and sincerely committed to their self-imposed isolation, they pose no threat to the practice of liberal citizenship in society generally. Such groups should not be encouraged, since they accept no responsibility to work together with other citizens to solve the country's injustices and problems. They are free riders, in a sense, benefitting from a stable liberal order that they do nothing to help maintain.[12] But a liberal state can afford a few such free riders.[13]

By contrast, other religious groups seeking exemption from integrated schools are active participants in both civil society and politics, and seek to influence public policy generally. This would include fundamentalist Christians in the United States, or Muslims in Britain. In these cases, one could argue that, having chosen to exercise their rights as full citizens, they must accept the sort of education needed to promote responsible citizenship, including the obligation to attend common schools at some point in the educational process.

4. Citizenship and Personal Autonomy

A related question is whether schools, be they separate or common, should promote the capacity for individual autonomy. 'Autonomy' means different things to different people. I am

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12. I am here disagreeing with those who defend the exemption for the Amish by arguing that their separate schools provide adequate citizenship education. This was the view of the American Supreme Court, which said that the Amish education system prepared Amish children to be good citizens, since they became productive and peaceful members of the Amish community (Wisconsin v Yoder 406 US 205 (1972)). However, as I noted earlier, liberal citizenship requires more than being law-abiding and economically self-sufficient. For a critique of Yoder's account of civic responsibilities, see Shapiro and Arneson 1995.

13. As Spinner notes, there are unlikely to be many such groups, since the price of 'partial citizenship' is to cut oneself off from the opportunities and resources of the mainstream society (Spinner 1994: chap. 5).

using the term to refer to the capacity to rationally reflect on, and potentially revise, our conceptions of the good life. An autonomous person is capable of reflecting on her current ends, and assessing whether they are worthy of her continued allegiance. Autonomy, on this view, is consistent with people endorsing their inherited way of life, if they reflectively prefer it to the alternatives. But it is inconsistent with an uncritical attitude towards inherited traditions, or with an unquestioning acceptance of the pronouncements of parents, priests or community leaders regarding the worth of different ways of life.[14]

I did not include autonomy in my list of the basic virtues of liberal citizenship in section 1, and I do not think that autonomy, in and of itself, is necessary for the practice of democratic citizenship. However, there are good reasons to think that autonomy will be indirectly promoted by citizenship education, since it is closely associated, both conceptually and developmentally, to various civic virtues.

For example, responsible citizenship involves the willingness to hold political authorities accountable. Hence schools should teach children to be sceptical of the political authorities who govern in our name, and to be cognizant of the dangers of the abuse of power. As Amy Gutmann puts it, children at school "must learn not just to behave in accordance with authority but to think critically about authority if they are to live up to the democratic ideal of sharing political sovereignty as citizens". People who "are ruled only by habit and authority... are incapable of constituting a society of sovereign citizens" (Gutmann 1987:51).

This democratic virtue is exercised in public life, and promoting it does not entail or require encouraging children to question parental or religious authority in private life. As Galston puts it, the need to teach children how to evaluate political leaders "does not warrant the conclusion that the state must (or may) structure public education to foster in children sceptical reflection on ways of life inherited from parents or local communities" (Galston 1991:253). But there will likely be some spillover effect. Indeed, there is strong evidence that adolescents' attitudes towards authority tend "to be uniform across all the authority figures they encounter", so that encouraging scepticism of political authority will likely encourage questioning of familial or religious authority (Emler and Reicher 1987). Galston himself admits that it is not easy for schools to promote a child's willingness to question political authority without undermining her "unswerving belief in the correctness" of her parents' way of life.

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14. I mean to distinguish this account of autonomy from two other interpretations. On one (Kantian) view, the exercise of choice is intrinsically valuable, since it is the most distinctly human attribute. On another (Millian) view, the exercise of choice is valuable insofar as it leads to greater 'individuality' – that is, insofar as it leads individuals to reject traditional ways of life, and construct their own unique way of life. People who reject these views may nonetheless accept the more modest idea that informed choice is valuable because our current beliefs about the good may be mistaken, and so it is important for people to be able to assess the value of alternative ways of life. On this, see Kymlicka 1989:chap. 2.

Citizenship education not only involves promoting a certain sort of critical attitude towards authority, it also involves developing habits of civility and the capacity for public reasonableness. Both of these indirectly promote autonomy, since they encourage children to interact with the members of other groups, to understand the reasonableness of other ways of life, and to distance themselves from their own cultural traditions.

Consider civility. In section 1, I emphasized that norms of civility and non-discrimination protect ethnic and religious groups from prejudice and discrimination. This means that groups wishing to maintain their group identity and cultural practices will face fewer legal barriers or social stigmas. But civility also increases the interaction between the members of different groups, and hence the likelihood that individuals will learn and adopt new ways of life. Historically, cultural boundaries have often been maintained by the visible expression of prejudice towards outsiders; people stayed within their group because they were not welcome elsewhere. The spread of civility in social institutions (including schools) means that these boundaries tend to break down. Members of one group are more likely to cooperate with and befriend children of other groups, and so learn about other ways of life, and possibly adopt new identities and practices.

Simply by teaching and practising civility, schools make this sort of mingling and fraternizing between the members of different groups more likely, and hence make the breakdown of cultural barriers more likely. In some cases, adopting other ways of life may be done in an unreflective way, simply imitating one's peers, and hence does not count as the exercise of autonomy. But schools also promote a more reflective process, by teaching the virtue of public reasonableness. Because reasonable people disagree about the merits of different religions and conceptions of the good life, children must learn to distinguish reasons based on private faith from reasons that can be publicly accepted in a diverse society. To develop this capacity, children must not only learn how to distance themselves from beliefs that are taken for granted in their private life, but they must also learn to put themselves in other people's shoes, in order to see what sorts of reasons might be acceptable to people from other backgrounds. The virtue of public reasonableness does not require that children come to admire or cherish other ways of life. But it does require that children be exposed to competing ways of life, and be encouraged to view them as the expressions of coherent conceptions of value which have been sincerely affirmed by other reasonable people. Learning to view other ways of life in this way does not inevitably lead to the questioning of one's own way of life, but it surely makes it more likely, since it requires a sort of broad-mindedness which is hard to combine with an unreflective deference to traditional practices or authorities.

For all these reasons, education for democratic citizenship will almost unavoidably, albeit indirectly, promote autonomy. Through citizenship education children both become aware of alternative ways of life, and are given the intellectual skills needed to understand and appreciate them. As Gutmann puts it, citizenship education involves "equipping children with

the intellectual skills necessary to evaluate ways of life different from that of their parents", because "many if not all of the capacities necessary for choice among good lives are also necessary for choice among good societies" (Gutmann 1987:30,40). Democratic citizenship and personal autonomy, while distinct, are interconnected at various levels.

As a result, those groups which rely heavily on an uncritical acceptance of tradition and authority, while not strictly ruled out, are bound to be discouraged by the critical and tolerant attitudes which civic education encourages (Macedo 1990:53–4). This indeed is why religious groups often seek to establish separate schools, even when they have to teach a common curriculum. They fear that if their children attend common schools, they will be more likely to question traditional practices, even if the school curriculum does not directly promote this sort of autonomous attitude. To preserve an uncritical deference to communal traditions, children can only be exposed to a minimal level of citizenship education, one that teaches facts about government, but not civility, public reasonableness, or critical attitudes to political authority.

I should note two qualifications here. First, citizenship education historically has often discouraged, rather than encouraged, autonomy. The aim of citizenship education, in the past, was to promote an unreflective patriotism, one which glorifies the past history and current political system of the country, and which vilifies opponents of that political system, whether they be internal dissidents or external enemies (Nelson 1980). This sort of civic education, needless to say, promoted passivity and deference, not a critical attitude towards political authority or a broad-mindedness towards cultural differences. Today, however, educational theorists and policy-makers increasingly reject this model of civic education, in favour of one that promotes more active and reflective forms of citizenship.[15] The earlier form of civic education can still be found, of course, and some people continue to defend it (see Galston 1991: 244; AASA 1987:26). However, if our aim is to produce self-governing democratic citizens, rather than passive subjects of an authoritarian government, a different sort of civic education is required, one which is much more likely to promote autonomy.

Second, I have suggested that the promotion of personal autonomy should be seen as the indirect consequence of civic education, not as its direct or explicit purpose. I do not mean to deny, however, that there might be other reasons for directly promoting personal autonomy. Indeed, a strong case could be made that promoting autonomy is an integral part of an adequate education for modern life. While autonomy may not be needed to fulfil the social role of citizen, it may be needed if children are to enjoy life to the greatest extent possible. If so, then children may have a right to an autonomy-promoting education, even where their parents

15. We can mark this shift by comparing two accounts of the relationship between civic education and moral reasoning. Writing in 1980, Jack Nelson objected that contemporary accounts of civic education promoted passive deference, and so conflicted with the sort of autonomy which he felt was required by true moral agents. By 1991, however, William Galston was arguing that contemporary accounts of civic education excessively promote critical reflectiveness, and so undermined the sort of moral identity and moral commitment underlying many religious groups.

resist it. To pursue this question however would raise issues that go far beyond this paper. While I am myself attracted to the view that schools should promote autonomy, it would be misleading to defend this as a precondition of democratic citizenship. Autonomy, I think, is valuable not because it makes people better citizens, but because it enables people to lead more fulfilling lives, quite independently of their role as citizens.[16]

5. Citizenship and National Identity

Finally, I want to briefly address the issue of identity. As I noted earlier, many commentators argue that social unity in a liberal democracy rests not on a shared identity, but rather on shared allegiance to political principles. As Rawls puts it, "although a well-ordered society is divided and pluralistic... public agreement on questions of political and social justice supports ties of civic friendship and secures the bonds of association" (Rawls 1980: 540; Strike 1994:8). On this view, by teaching certain common political principles – like principles of justice, tolerance and civility – citizenship education provides the foundation for national unity as well.

I think this is a mistake. Shared political principles obviously are helpful to maintain social unity, and indeed deep conflict over basic principles can lead to civil war. But shared principles are not sufficient. Consider the case of Canada. As a result of the rapid liberalization of Quebecois society since the 1960s, there has been a pronounced convergence in political principles between English- and French-speaking Canadians over the last 30 years, so that it would now be "difficult to identify consistent differences in attitudes on issues such as moral values, prestige ranking of professions, role of the government, workers' rights, aboriginal rights, equality between the sexes and races, and conception of authority" (Dion 1991:301). If the 'shared principles' approach were correct, we should have witnessed a decline in support for Quebec secession over this period, yet nationalist sentiment has in fact grown consistently.

The fact that anglophones and francophones in Canada share the same principles of justice is not a strong reason to remain together, since the Québécois rightly assume that their own national state could respect the same principles. Deciding to secede would not require them to abandon their political principles, since they could implement the same principles in their own state.

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16. I am skipping lightly over a very deep division within liberal political philosophy. There is an important debate between "political" or "pragmatic" liberals and "comprehensive" or "ethical" liberals over the role of autonomy with liberal theory. Political liberals, like John Rawls and Charles Larmore, argue that because many groups within society do not value autonomy, liberals must look for a way of justifying liberal institutions that does not appeal to such a 'sectarian' value (Rawls 1993; Larmore 1987). Comprehensive liberals, like Joseph Raz, argue that liberal institutions can only be defended by appealing to the value of autonomy (Raz 1986). I discuss this debate, and defend the comprehensive liberal option, in Kymlicka 1995: chap. 8. See also Callan (1994b), who argues that the distinction between political and comprehensive liberalism cannot be sustained in the educational context. However, for a critique of the emphasis on autonomy, and a defense of Muslim demands for a separate school system that restricts the development of autonomy, see Halstead 1990; 1991.

The fact that increased Quebec nationalism has gone hand in hand with increased convergence on political principles is often seen as a 'paradox'. But it reflects a very general trend. Consider the Flemish in Belgium, or the Basques in Spain. Throughout the West, an increasing convergence on liberal values has gone hand in hand with continued, even increasing, demands for self-government by ethnonational minorities.

This suggests that shared political principles are not sufficient for social unity. The fact that two groups share the same principles of justice does not necessarily give them a strong reason to remain together, rather than splitting into two separate countries.[17] If two groups want to live together under a single state, then sharing political principles makes it easier to do so. But shared political principles is not, in and of itself, a reason why two groups should want to live together.

Social unity, then, requires not only shared principles, but also a sense of shared membership. Citizens must have a sense of belonging to the same community, and a shared desire to continue to live together. Social unity, in short, requires that citizens identify their fellow citizens as one of 'us'. This sense of shared identity helps sustain the relationships of trust and solidarity needed for citizens to accept the results of democratic decisions, and the obligations of liberal justice (Miller 1995).

What underlies this shared national identity? In non-liberal states, shared identity is typically based on a common ethnic descent, religious faith, or conception of the good. However, these cannot provide the basis for social unity in a liberal state, since none of them are shared in modern pluralist states.

What then makes citizens in a liberal state feel that they belong together, that they are members of the same nation? The answer typically involves a sense of shared history, and a common language. Citizens share a sense of belonging to a particular historical society because they share a language and history; they participate in common social and political institutions which are based on this shared language, and which manifest and perpetuate this shared history; and they see their life-choices as bound up with the survival of this society and its institutions into the indefinite future. Citizens can share a national identity in this sense, and yet share very little in terms of ethnicity, religion, or conceptions of the good.[18]

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17. For a more detailed development of this argument, see Norman 1995. For a related critique of the idea that shared principles underlie social unity, see Paris 1991.

18. This is a thumbnail sketch of the nature of national identity in a liberal state, and its role in promoting political stability and relationships of trust and solidarity. For accounts of liberal nationalism, see Tamir 1993; Spinner 1994:chap. 7; Miller 1995; and Kymlicka 1995.

The need for this sort of common national identity raises many questions for citizenship education. I will focus on two, regarding the teaching of languages, and the teaching of history, both of which are fundamental to the construction of a national identity.

First, what should be the language of the school system? This is a remarkably neglected question in liberal theory.[19] The need for a common national identity suggests that states should inculcate a common language. And indeed the definition, standardization and teaching of an official language has been one of the first tasks of 'nation-building' throughout the world (Gellner 1983).

But whether imposing a common language promotes social unity depends on the circumstances. The historical evidence suggests that voluntary immigrant groups are willing to adopt the language of the mainstream society. They have already uprooted themselves from their original homeland, and know that the success of their decision to emigrate depends on some measure of integration into their host society. Insofar as they demand education in their mother-tongue, it is in addition to, or as a means of facilitating, learning the common language, not as a substitute. Much of the opposition to bilingual education for immigrant groups is, I think, misguided, but liberal states have a legitimate interest in ensuring that these programs do ultimately lead to competence in the language of the mainstream society.

The case of territorially concentrated language groups whose homeland has been incorporated into larger states – like the Québécois, Puerto Ricans, or Flemish, or indigenous peoples around the world – is very different. They have strongly – even violently – resisted the attempt to have the majority language imposed on them. This reflects the fact that they typically view themselves as forming their own 'nation' or 'people', and so have their own sense of national identity, with their own language, history, and encompassing social institutions.

States with such groups are not nation-states, but multi-nation states, and attempts to impose a single national identity on these 'national minorities' are likely to undermine rather than promote social unity. Multination states are most stable if they are seen as a federation of peoples, each with their own historic territories, language rights, and powers of self-government.[20]

In multination states, then, citizenship education typically has a dual function – it promotes a national identity within each constituent national group, defined by a common language and history, but it also seeks to promote some sort of transnational identity which can bind

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19. As Brian Weinstein put it, political theorists have had a lot to say about "the language of politics" – that is, the symbols, metaphors and rhetorical devices of political discourse – but have had virtually nothing to say about "the politics of language" – that is, the decisions about which languages to use in political, legal and educational forums (Weinstein 1983:7–13).
20. For evidence of this, see Gurr 1993; Hannum 1990.

together the various national groups within the state. Unfortunately, recent developments in multination states – eg. the breakdown of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, the constitutional crises in Belgium and Canada – suggest that it is very difficult to construct and maintain this transnational identity. And indeed schools have little idea how to go about promoting this identity.

This points to an important gap in political and educational theory. Most liberal accounts of civic identity argue that shared political principles are the basis of civic identity. Implicitly, however, they typically assume that citizens share not only principles, but also a common language and sense of membership in a national community. The problem is that neither the explicit emphasis on principles, nor the implicit emphasis on shared language and history, can explain social unity in multination states. If schools are to fulfil their responsibilities regarding citizenship education, we need an entirely new account of the basis of shared identity in multination states.

Insofar as a common national identity rests on identifying with a shared history, as well as a common language, this raises important questions about the teaching of history. One way – a particularly effective way – to promote identification with a group's history is to deliberately misrepresent that history. As William Galston puts it, in reference to the United States, "rigorous historical research will almost certainly vindicate complex 'revisionist' accounts of key figures in American history. Civic education, however, requires a nobler, moralizing history: a pantheon of heroes who confer legitimacy on central institutions and are worthy of emulation" (Galston 1991:244). Similarly, Andrew Oldenquist argues that information about the American nation and government

> should be taught so as to provide grounds for developing pride and affection... If instead we start nine-year-olds with a litany of evils and injustices, they will be likely to learn cynicism and alienation. A teacher may respond, 'But I teach about problems and injustices because I want to make my country better; if I did not have concern and affection for it I would not care about reforming it'. Precisely. The teacher did not acquire affection for our country by being told that we exterminated Indians, lynched Blacks, and slaughtered Vietnamese. The teacher's concern and affection survived this knowledge because of prior training and experience, and the pupils, like the teacher, need to acquire a basis for good citizenship before they are plunged into what is ugly" (AASA:1987:26).

This raises a number of troubling questions about citizenship education. For one thing, this way of promoting a national identity may undermine another goal of citizenship education – i.e. the development of the capacity for independent and critical thought about society and its problems. Moreover, the proper development of civic virtue may require an honest appreciation of how those virtues were lacking in our history. It seems unlikely that children can learn the

true meaning of civility and public reasonableness when historical figures who were in fact insensitive to great injustices are held up as exemplars of civic virtue (Callan 1994a).

Also, it seems clear that the sanitized version of history that Galston and Oldenquist defend can itself be a cause of disunity. An account of history that focuses on the "pantheon of heroes", while ignoring the historical mistreatment of women, blacks, Indians, Jews etc., is essentially an account of the history of upper-class white men. And it is precisely this view of history which many minorities find so offensive. They are insulted by the way their struggles are rendered invisible in school books.

For these reasons, schools should, I think, teach history truthfully. But that doesn't mean that history should not play a special role in the curriculum. There is, I think, a legitimate role for schools to promote an emotional identification with our history. Students should view the nation's history as their history, and hence take pride in its accomplishments, as well as shame in its injustices. This sense of identification with the nation's history is one of the few means available to maintain social unity in a pluralistic state, and may be needed if citizens are to embrace their responsibilities for upholding just institutions, and rectifying historical injustices.[21]

This shows, yet again, that citizenship education is not simply a matter of teaching the basic facts about governmental institutions or constitutional principles. It is also a matter of inculcating particular habits, virtues and identities.

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21. For a sensitive exploration of this issue, see Callan 1994a.

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